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How Super Power Becomes Super Impotence

The importance of all the excitement over Laos does not lie in the questions on which our newspapers focus attention. The importance of Laos is that it dramatizes the impotence of the world's super-powers, with their super armies, and their super bombs. It is truly comical. The other day Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, gave an interview to four newspapers (*Washington Star,* April 28) on the Laotian crisis. One sentence stuck out. "The skirmishes that pushed back the Neutralist enclaves," i.e. the pro-Communist advances in the Plain of Jars which made those screaming headlines in our papers, Mr. Hilsman disclosed, "did not have more than 100 men on each side."

The Laotions Couldn't Care Less

Yet these skirmishes between poorly armed handfuls of soldiers in this distant little land sent Harriman flying to see Khrushchev as special emissary for Kennedy. The upshot seems to be that the Russians (and even the Chinese) have very little control over what is happening in this roadless jungle country. We and the Russians each have some 3,000,000 men under arms. We both have bombs with which we could wipe all Laos off the face of the earth in one attack. The Laotians yawn at both of us. Thanks to the $10 billion a year increase in military spending under Kennedy, we are ready to fight any variety of war: the ultimate war, limited nuclear war, conventional mass scale war, conventional little wars, and even anti-guerrilla wars (with small detachments of Special Services trained to crawl through the high grass and cut an enemy's throat with a knife before he can say thermonuclear). We even have a small army of CIA men in Laos—but all they've been able to do in the past few years (if we may be forgiven the irresistible pun) is to louse it up even more.

The greatest military power on earth is ineffective. We wield the most terrible firepower the world has ever known, but few people seem to be afraid of it. In Laos, we are helpless. In Vietnam, our intervention is enabling our Vietcong adversaries to exchange their home-made weapons (see box top of col. 2 p. 2) for new model U.S. arms. Cuba? Castro thumbs his nose at us with impunity. We're afraid to send the Marines into Haiti. We acquiesce as the democracy we claim to defend goes under to military coups in Argentina, Peru and Guatemala. In Korea, where we intervened in force, the South is as much a dictatorship as the North but with less industrial progress. We seem unable either to intimidate our enemies or to make our allies behave. To reverse Churchill's famous remark, in our case never have so many armed with so much been able to do so little. Super power seems to have become super impotence.

The weapons have become so terrible both big powers are afraid not only to use them but afraid even to use lesser arms lest the conflict soon escalate. Yet neither dares get off the treadmill of the arms race for fear the other fellow will somehow come up with a new monster, more terrible still. The nature of weaponry, the emergence of the colonial peoples to independence, the world-wide revulsion against nuclear arms, and the irrepressible fight of the darker and hungrier peoples against Western white domination, makes it ever more difficult to use war as an instrument of policy, but we pour out more billions on armament. The military machine runs on mindlessly, despite its dwindling utility for anything but suicide. Secretary McNamara in talking of his troubles told the newspaper editors at their meeting in Washington that while the 1964 arms budget was $10 billions more than Eisenhower's, it was still $13 billion less than the military chiefs asked. He said that new ideas for new weapons were coming along so fast that "even if we were to draft every scientist and engineer in the country, we could still develop only a fraction of the systems that are proposed." He might have added that the more deadly the weapons become the more frightened we are of using them. The Chinese call us paper tiger. They're wrong. We're a giant, but muscle-bound.

The Dog That Bit The South

We do not deplore events in Birmingham. We welcome them. It is thrilling to see the Negro people of the South asserting itself. Their reception is news only to the wilfully ignorant. The only difference between current events and the past is magnitude. What the police have long been accustomed to doing with the individual Negro who resisted humiliation, they cannot do in secret when thousands mass. So the whole country sees the police brutes, with their billies, their guns, their electric prods, their dogs. We applaud Chief Judge David L. Bazelon of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. In a speech to the Federal Bar Association, he brought down on himself the anger of Southerners in Congress by his astringent remarks on the use of police dogs. He questioned "the use of terror evoked by the threat of setting beasts against human beings." The police claim this is effective. "Assuming for the moment that it is," Judge Bazelon said. "A full scale reign of terror might be effective, too. But could we respect ourselves if we instituted one?" That picture of a police dog lunging open-jawed at a Negro on the front pages of the newspapers May 4 was worth a million dollars to the cause of Negro liberation. That dog was the dog that bit the South and in full view of the whole world.

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Revealing That the U.S. Might Agree to As Few As Six On-Site Inspections

The Story Behind Symington's "Scoop" on Meet the Press

On Meet the Press April 28, Senator Symington (D. Mo) claimed that he had succeeded in declassifying information which showed that the U.S. might accept as few as six on-site inspections a year in the current test ban talks at Geneva. This revelation has a curious history.

It was declassified from the executive session testimony given the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 26 by Dr. Harold Brown, director of defense research and engineering, the Pentagon's top scientific official. Dr. Brown, who was formerly with Dr. Edward Teller at the Livermore Laboratory and then shared Dr. Teller's hostility to a test ban, has since changed his mind. This has made him a target for those like Senator Symington who are against a test ban agreement. The result of Symington's disclosure was to make Dr. Brown look like one of those "soft" negotiators about whom the hard-liners on Capitol Hill are complaining.

Tipping the U. S. Hand

But the disclosure also had another effect. The desire to put Dr. Brown on the spot seems to have led the Senator to do on TV exactly what he himself had criticized a few days earlier in the same hearings.

Symington on February 20 had objected to speculation in the newspapers that the U.S. negotiators in Geneva might take fewer than 7 on-site inspections a year. "As one of our great industrialists of this country," Symington asked Secretary McNamara that day, "if you said the price of a car today is $2500, but next month probably would be $2000, do you think you could make a sale?" McNamara replied, "It is tough enough to sell cars without that kind of a pricing basis."

But when Dr. Brown came before the committee on February 26, Senator Symington drew him into a discussion designed to show just how few on-site inspections the U.S. would agree to. The actual figures and some of Dr. Brown's answers explaining his reluctance to go into them were deleted from the printed record, as released to the press April 4.

Now it turns out that the Senator succeeded, through pressure on the Pentagon's Capitol Hill liaison people in getting this part of the record declassified.

It is a pity no one on the Meet the Press program knew this background, or was aware that the Pentagon security officers insisted also in restoring (on pages 484-5 of the hearings) previously deleted remarks in which Dr. Brown had objected that negotiations were not made easier by disclosing the government's fall-back position while talks were going on.

Confidential to Barry Goldwater

Philadelphia, April 29 (AP)—Sen. Barry Goldwater (R. Ariz) said today this country should act now to bomb out railroad and highway facilities used by the Chinese Communists to supply men and munitions to Southeast Asia.

—Washington Post, April 30.

Q. How does the Vietcong get its weapons?

A. Most Vietcong weapons now are new U.S. military weapons, captured in ambushes on government units and attacks on outposts. Often a Vietcong unit is organized initially with no weapons. The political organizer tells his men and women they must fight at first with handmade arms—spears, daggers, swords and crude shotguns. To get better weapons, the unit must capture them from the enemy. The system evidently works. Vietcong arms now include modern recoilless cannon, heavy mortars, good machine guns and very large supplies of submachine guns."

—Malcolm W. Browne, for the past year and a half chief Associated Press correspondent in South Vietnam. This backgrounder was carried on the AP ticker. I saw it in the Rochester Times-Union, April 25.

The full record now shows that despite this argument, Symington persisted. He wanted to know whether just one on-site inspection a year would be acceptable? Two? Three? To each of these questions Dr. Brown replied "unacceptable." When Symington asked about four, Dr. Brown said he was "not happy with four." Symington then asked, "How about five?" Dr. Brown replied, "I am somewhat unhappy with five." Then Symington asked, "Six?" to which Dr. Brown replied:

But I think you could live with six or seven providing that you can get inspection procedures that were acceptable, and providing the decision on when an inspection was made was not subject to loss of negotiation on each one.

So when Symington was asked on Meet the Press, "is there any indication we would accept even fewer than 7 [on-site inspections] a year?", the Senator replied dramatically, "Well, it was classified, but I think that all this information should be given the American people and therefore it has been declassified." Then he added, "Dr. Brown, who is the head engineer and scientist in the Pentagon building, has stated that he thinks six would be satisfactory; that is one less." We can't quite figure out whether this "scoop" calls for a Pulitzer or a Lenin Prize.

Two Footnotes to Lord Russell's "Arrant Nonsense" About South Vietnam

"It is an atrocity because such things as napalm bombs are being used—bombs which do not simply kill, but which burn and torture—and that chemical warfare is employed to destroy crops and livestock and so to starve the people of South Vietnam."

—From a letter by Bertrand Russell to the New York Times May 4 replying to an editorial in which it accused him of indulging in "arrant nonsense" about Vietnam.

"The chemicals are also being used [in Vietnam] to destroy food crops in areas that support Communists and are established beyond a doubt as Communist controlled."

—From extension of remarks by Cong. Joseph E. Karth (Dem-Farmer-Labor, Minn) on "Herbicides in the Fight Against Communism", Congressional Record May 2, p. 2722.

"A troubling question is whether the use of poisonous sprays is a valid technique of warfare. That is, will the military results be offset by political disadvantages, by resentment over the destruction of food?

"The same dilemma arises over the use of strafing, bombs, rockets and napalm to destroy peasant villages where ground-fire has indicated the presence of guerrillas."

—"Political Reaction A Problem in The Use of 'Dirty' Tactics to Fight Viet Cong Guerrillas," report from Vietnam by Richard Dudman, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb. 6.

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Javits Splits the Northern Democrats from JFK; Ryan's Model Civil Rights Bills

How the Negro Upsurge Is Beginning to Make Itself Felt in Congress

The Negro upsurge, if it continues, may have a major impact on Congress. It may move the Northern liberal Democrats away from the Kennedy Administration and into a new kind of Republican coalition, this time for more militant action on Negro rights. The possibility appeared in the unexpectedly large vote cast May 1 for the motion by the Republican liberal, Javits, of New York, to deny Farmers Home Administration funds to States which discriminate against Negroes.

A Mere Shift of Five Votes

The Javits move was in accordance with the unanimous recommendations of the U.S. Civil Service Commission asking the President and Congress to consider cutting off Federal funds to such States as Mississippi. Javits tacked an anti-discrimination amendment onto an appropriation bill. In the House this is known as a "Powell amendment." The Javits move in the Senate brought some startling results. First was the size of the vote for it: 38 to 47; a shift of five votes would have meant victory. Secondly, every Republican but one voted with Javits, even those whose dedication to white supremacy (like Mundt of South Dakota, Pearson of Kansas) had previously been thought unshakeable. Only such an economic conservative as Young of North Dakota refused to break faith with the southerners.

Most important of all, the Democratic liberals split. Douglas (*Ill*), Hart (*Mich*), Nelson (*Wis*) and Long (*Mo*) voted with Javits while Humphrey (*Minn*), Clark (*Pa*), Morse (*Ore*) and McNamara (*Mich*) voted against him. How long can they (and such Democrats as Bayh, McCarthy, McGovern, Pastore and Pell) resist if pressure from the Negroes rises? If all the Republicans and some Northern Democrats should vote for civil rights measures, it will become increasingly difficult for the Administration to hold the line and continue its present strategy of wooing the Southern Democrats. The vote came only one week after a Washington conference held by the National Committee against Discrimination in Housing protested the torpor which has marked enforcement of Kennedy's order on housing. One official remarked, "It must have been written in invisible ink."

Javits intends to raise the segregation issue on every appropriation bill. He and Senator Hart (*D. Mich*) have also asked every department of the Federal government, in specific letters, to tell them what it is doing about discrimination in the programs it administers. Between them they will make it very uncomfortable for Democratic liberals to toe the cautious Kennedy line on civil rights.

In the House, Wm. Fitts Ryan of New York, its most militant Democrat, has introduced the most comprehensive and advanced civil rights program yet. On education, he would require a desegregation plan from every school district, with Health, Education and Welfare assistance. On voting, he would abolish literacy tests and install Federal registrars where local officers discriminate in registration. A third Ryan bill would provide criminal and civil sanctions against police brutality and other violations of civil rights by State officers. A fourth bill would widen the powers and duties of the Attorney General in civil rights cases. The most far-reaching is the bill which would set up a permanent Civil Rights Commission modelled on the National Labor Relations Board with power to issue cease-and-desist orders against race discrimination in housing, trade unions, banking and business. The package hasn't a chance at the moment, of course, but it sets a goal for the civil rights movement.

Racism in Rural Lending

The U.S. Farmers Home Administration makes loans to laborers and tenants. It is administered through county committees, usually of three farmers. Javits told the Senate there was not a single Negro on these committees anywhere in the U.S. He also called attention to a study of nine rural counties in South Carolina by the Southern Regional Council. This showed that in the last three years only nine loans had been made to Negroes to help them acquire their own farms. Though Negroes are roughly half the population in these counties, they received less than 5% of the total farm ownership loans and only 7% of those for farm housing. Obviously county committees in such areas look with disfavor on Negro loan applicants who "get out of line." Javits said denial of Federal loans becomes another economic sanction against Negroes "who have the temerity to want to vote."

"Free Enterprise" in Space—But The Government Still Foots The Bill

The Communications Satellite Corp. seems destined to become a monument to the inanity of extending "free enterprise" into space. This Corporation was supposed to take over the expense of setting up a network of satellites to carry all kinds of messages around the world. It has voted its chairman, Leo D. Welch of Standard Oil, $125,000 a year and its president, Joseph V. Charyk, $80,000. They have proceeded to rent "Tregaron," Washington's most palatial estate, for their offices. In the meantime they are putting off the issuance of stock for another year or 18 months while the expense of developing the satellites is borne by the government.

Congressman Wm. Fitts Ryan of New York recalled before the House Committee on Science that the decision to hand communications satellites over to a private corporation was defended on the ground that "private enterprise would have more flexibility, greater speed." Mr. Ryan protested that NASA programmed $43 million for work on communications satellites in fiscal 1963 and is asking $51 million more for fiscal 1964. Mr. Ryan wanted to know why the taxpayer should go on financing work from which a private corporation will profit.

In the fight last year against handing over communications satellites Senators Kefauver, Morse, Gruening, Gore and others predicted that the government would still foot the bill and asked why the rush to set up a private corporation. Now the incorporators and directors speak in leisurely terms of anticipating an operational system by 1965. In the meantime we hope the 15 Senators who tried to block confirmation on April 25 will keep an eye on Mr. Welch. They will find, if they look into it, that he has been doing work on the side for his old company by complaining to U.S. officials against the refusal of the Dominican Republic's Juan Bosch to play ball with Standard Oil.

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A Nuclear Free Zone for Latin America: One Way to Deal With Our Cuban Fears

Unfulfilled Reform Promises Behind Italy's Slight Shift Leftward

The truth about the Italian elections is that the Pope's encyclicals and "the opening to the Left" are still unfulfilled promises. A strong Communist vote is a necessity to make the Catholic-Left Socialist alliance deliver the goods against strong pressure from Italy's unregenerate capitalists and landowners. . . . While the U.S. talks of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is cold to the 5-power Latin American proposal for a nuclear-free hemisphere. The Germans fear all nuclear-free zone proposals as an obstacle to their own nuclear rearmament and we frown on the Latin proposals because it is also addressed to Cuba. But if we fear nuclear arms in Cuba, why not support this proposal? . . . And why not a nuclear free zone for the Middle East as a foundation for Arab-Israeli peace? . . .

Castro and Yevtushenko

Castro's eyes must have been opened to certain Soviet realities by the pointed exclusion from his welcoming reception of his friend and Cuba's champion, Yevtushenko. The latter's poem on Cuba was too freedom loving for Khrushchev's bureaucratic tastes. In this connection we heartily recommend Patricia Blake's warmly sympathetic account of the Soviet poets in the latest issue of *Encounter*. . . . The *Chicago Tribune's* Ottawa correspondent (April 21) reported that Canada's new Prime Minister, Pearson, will accept atomic arms unwillingly and favors diplomatic recognition of China. . . . Wider publicity ought to be given former Ambassador James J. Wadsworth's address at Franklin and Marshall College (*York, Pa., Gazette*, April 26) in which he said the Soviets would not cheat on a test ban because it would not be in their interest to do so. . . .

As basic ammunition for all peace groups we highly recommend the joint study "A Strategy for American Security" by Seymour Melman, Dr. Benjamin Spock and other scholars. It spells out in dollars and cents an alternative to the 1964 military budget. (Copies can be obtained from Lee Offset, Inc., (Dept ST), 48 E. 21st St., New York 10, N.Y., for 50 cents each). . . . We hope liberal groups will organize soon against both the rightist idea of a "Cold War Academy" (there should be no place in a free society for a school to teach an official idology and train CIA-type cold war intellectuals) nor for the State Department's idea of a Foreign Service Academy. The Foreign Service suffers too much as it is from being an ingrown clique of upper class minded dilettantes. The wider the education and the wider the area from which it is recruited the better for American diplomacy. We don't need a cookie-pusher's "West Point.". . .

Washington's Biggest Bore

The House Un-American Activities Committee is getting to be Washington's biggest bore. The hearings begun while this issue was being prepared for press are running true to form. It is a painful experience to sit there hour after hour while the Committee pieces together obscure little ads from The Worker and The National Guardian to prove that on a certain night in July 1961 some minuscule group for peace with Cuba heard some radical make a speech (with refreshments and slides thrown in, all for 99 cents). Its one startling revelation so far is that a Negro free lance photographer got his passport extended in Cuba although he had expressed pro-Castro views. We welcome this evidence that the State Department is being infiltrated by the First Amendment. We wish the same could be said of the Committee. Just what it is trying to prove by subpoenaing writers who have expressed pro-Castro views is not clear—except perhaps that free speech still survives un-Americanly in the USA. Its most prominent target, Leo Huberman, was on the stand at press time; perhaps questioning will bring out how much money the government might have saved if before the Bay of Pigs disaster it had fired the CIA's Cuba division and listened instead to the warnings his Monthly Review (only $6 a year) was printing at the time against an invasion. Conrad Lynn, Negro lawyer for the Monroe, N. C. defendants, gave a rare exhibition of frankness, self-respect and contempt before the Committee. Its failing power to intimidate was being dramatically demonstrated at the other side of the Capitol where Women Strike for Peace, HUAC's most recent smear target, was holding a rally on the Capitol steps and being addressed by Senator Javits of New York and Rep. Kastenmeier of Wisconsin!

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